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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ALGIERS 002317

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PARM PREL KNNP IR EU AG

SUBJECT: IRAN-RELATED BRIEFING DELIVERED TO MFA SECRETARY GENERAL

REF: A. STATE 202164

1B. STATE 199225

1C. STATE 199863

1D. ALGIERS 2247

CLASSIFIED BY: AMBASSADOR RICHARD W. ERDMAN,
FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

11. (S) AMBASSADOR, ACCCOMPANIED BY POLEC CHIEF AND ACTING SIMO, CALLED NOVEMBER 16 ON MFA SECRETARY GENERAL LAMAMRA TO DELIVER REF A TALKING POINTS AND INTRODUCE SENSITIVE SIMO BRIEFING ON IRANIAN NUCLEAR WEAPONIZATION EFFORTS.

AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT DUE TO LAMAMRA'S ABSENCE ABROAD THE PREVIOUS WEEK, WE DELIVERED THE SAME DEMARCHE PREVIOUSLY TO MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINES KHELIL (REF D) ON NOVEMBER 7 IN HIS CAPACITY AS HEAD OF THE INTERMINISTERIAL COMMITTEE THAT HAS RESPONSIBILITY FOR BOTH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR ISSUES AND THAT REPRESENTS ALGERIA AT IAEA BOARD MEETINGS IN VIENNA.

12. (S) AMBASSADOR EXPLAINED THAT WE HAD ACQUIRED SERIOUS DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE INDICATING THAT IRAN, DESPITE ITS CLAIMS TO THE CONTRARY, WAS IN FACT PURSUING A NUCLEAR WEAPONIZATION PROGRAM UNDER THE GUISE OF A CIVILIAN NUCLEAR ENERGY PROGRAM.

WHILE WE DID NOT HAVE EVIDENCE THAT IRAN HAS ACTUALLY ACQUIRED A NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAPABILITY, THE DOCUMENTS MADE CLEAR THAT IRAN HAS BEEN CONDUCTING EXTENSIVE RESEARCH AND HAS ENGAGED IN LONG-RANGE PLANNING TO THIS END. AMBASSADOR STRESSED THAT ACQUISITION BY IRAN OF A NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAPABILITY WOULD BE EXTREMELY DESTABILIZING FOR THE REGION. THERE WAS NO MARGIN FOR ERROR ON THIS QUESTION. IRANIAN PRESIDENT AHMADINEJAD'S RECENT DECLARATION CALLING FOR ISRAEL TO BE "WIPE OFF THE MAP" UNDERSCORED THE DESTABILIZING POTENTIAL OF A NUCLEAR-CAPABLE IRAN. IN THIS REGARD, WE HOPED ALGERIA WOULD PUBLICLY MAKE CLEAR THAT THIS KIND OF STATEMENT WAS NOT ACCEPTABLE.

13. (S) AMBASSADOR SAID THE INFORMATION IN THE BRIEFING NEEDED TO VIEWED IN THE CONTEXT OF IRAN'S TWO DECADES OF PURSUING UNDECLARED NUCLEAR ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING PLUTONIUM SEPARATION, URANIUM ENRICHMENT, AND OTHER ACTIVITIES AT UNDECLARED FACILITIES. THIS DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE SHOULD ALSO BE VIEWED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE HISTORY OF OTHER COUNTRIES -- LIKE IRAQ, LIBYA, AND NORTH KOREA -- WHOSE EFFORTS TO MASTER THE FUEL CYCLE WERE EXPLICITLY LINKED TO EFFORTS TO DEVELOP NUCLEAR WEAPONS. GIVEN IRAN'S ABUNDANT ENERGY RESOURCES, RUSSIA'S LIFETIME OFFER OF ENRICHED URANIUM, AND IRAN'S LIMITED NEED FOR THIS KIND OF MATERIAL, IRAN'S INSISTENCE ON MASTERING THE FULL NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE ONLY MADE SENSE IN THE CONTEXT OF A NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROGRAM. IN ORDER TO AVOID SUCH A DESTABILIZING DEVELOPMENT, THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY NEEDED TO BE VERY FIRM IN MAKING CLEAR TO IRAN THAT ITS PURSUIT OF A NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAPABILITY WAS UNACCEPTABLE, THAT IT MUST ABANDON PURSUIT OF THE FULL NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE, AND THAT IT MUST RETURN TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE. THE UNITED STATES STRONGLY SUPPORTED THE EU-3 EFFORTS AND WANTED TO SEE A DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION. WE HOPED WE WOULD HAVE ALGERIA'S SUPPORT FOR SUCH AN OUTCOME AT THE IAEA BOARD MEETING LATER IN THE MONTH.

14. (S) AFTER ACTING SIMO MADE HIS PRESENTATION, LAMAMRA THANKED U.S. SIDE FOR ITS PRESENTATION, EXPRESSING AGREEMENT THAT IRAN SHOULD NOT HAVE NUCLEAR WEAPONS. WHILE HE WAS NO EXPERT, PAST EXPERIENCE (IN REFERENCE TO PRE-WAR INTELLIGENCE ON IRAQ) DEMONSTRATED THE NEED FOR CAUTION. MAINTAINING CONSENSUS IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND IAEA PRESSURE WAS IMPORTANT, SAID LAMAMRA. BUT, NOTING THAT ALGERIA HAD ABSTAINED DURING THE LAST IAEA BOARD MEETING, HE ARGUED IT WAS ALSO IMPORTANT TO UNITE THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ON "SOLID GROUND." WITH REGARD TO AHMADINEJAD'S CALL FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL, HE READILY AGREED THIS WAS UNACCEPTABLE. ALGERIA HAD MADE ITS POSITION ON THIS ISSUE CLEAR, HE MAINTAINED, WHEN PRESIDENT BOUTEFLIKA ISSUED INSTRUCTIONS ON A FRIDAY DURING RAMADAN FOR ALGERIA TO SUPPORT A RESOLUTION AGAINST IRAN UNDER DISCUSSION THAT DAY IN THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL. (COMMENT: WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT "RESOLUTION" LAMAMRA WAS REFERRING TO, SUSPECT HE WAS CONFUSING IT WITH THE MEHLIS REPORT RESOLUTION, AND WOULD WELCOME ANY CLARIFICATION FROM USUN AS TO WHETHER THERE WAS SOME CONSIDERATION OF A SECURITY COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE AHMADINEJAD STATEMENT.)

15. (S) AMBASSADOR REPEATED THAT WE WANTED TO SEE A DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION AND WERE PREPARED FOR IRAN TO HAVE A PEACEFUL NUCLEAR ENERGY PROGRAM ALONG THE LINES PROPOSED BY

THE EUROPEANS. BUT CONVINCING IRAN TO ABANDON THE DESTABILIZING PURSUIT OF FULL NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE WOULD REQUIRE THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TAKING A CLEAR AND STRONG STAND. LAMAMRA ASKED IF IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT IRAN REALLY HAD NO NUCLEAR WEAPONIZATION INTENTIONS BUT HAD DEVELOPED THE DOCUMENTATION -- AND THEN ARRANGED FOR IT TO BE LEAKED -- AS PART OF AN ELABORATE SCHEME TO INCREASE ITS NEGOTIATING HAND. AMBASSADOR REPEATED HIS EARLIER CAUTION THAT WE HAD NO MARGIN FOR ERROR HERE. IRAN'S CURRENT ACTIVITIES HAD TO BE LOOKED AT IN THE CONTEXT OF ITS TWO DECADES OF DECEPTION IN COVERTLY PURSUING NUCLEAR PROGRAMS, ITS LACK OF ANY DEMONSTRABLE NEED FOR MASTERY OF THE FULL NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE, ITS CONTINUING LACK OF FULL COOPERATION WITH THE IAEA, AND THE FACT THAT ITS NUCLEAR PURSUITS ONLY MADE SENSE IN THE CONTEXT OF A NUCLEAR WEAPONIZATION PROGRAM.

SIEVERS